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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

*"We must open wider the doors of opportunity....  
for the good of our country and all our people"*

President Eisenhower

# NEWS

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C.

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At present more than 34 members of farm organizations (Farm Bureau, National Grange and Farmers Union) are serving on State-level rural development committees. Further evidence of the support major farm organizations are giving the new program are two important policy statements recently issued.

Addressing the annual meeting of the American Farm Bureau Federation in mid-December, President Charles B. Shuman said, "the new experimental Rural Development Program is providing a pattern which can help bring about the adjustments needed to improve the opportunities for low-income families either within or outside agriculture." Mr. Shuman pointed out that farmers had made great progress during recent years, yet many opportunities exist for further improvement. He cited the 1954 census of agriculture which shows that more than 2.5 million families living on farms have gross sales of less than \$2,500. Half these families are part-time or residential farmers, but for 1.2 million of them farming is the major source of income. The Farm Bureau head observed that the problem of many low-income farmers is "largely a social-educational problem."

Urging support of the Rural Development Program, he said, "county and State Farm Bureau organizations can do much to speed up this program and to develop similar activities wherever the problem exists. By working with business, civic, and other organizations, much can be done to improve off-the-farm job opportunities in rural areas."

In its recently published list of legislative policies and programs for 1957, the National Grange states, "we support the Rural Development Program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. We favor voluntary participation by farm people and rural communities, and urge that local direction be encouraged".

This is one of a series of periodic reports on Rural Development Program activities of business, farm civic, government and other community leadership working together. If you have information that might be of interest to those active in the program or you wish to receive this Newsletter, address communications to the Editor, Rural Development Program News, Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

**TIPPDAH COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI: VARIED  
PROJECTS TO MEET FARMING PROBLEMS**

People in Tippah County,  
one of Mississippi's  
three pilot counties,

are doing something about the serious farm problems that they list in a recent report: too many small, inefficient farms, shrinking cotton allotments, inadequate farm financing and marketing facilities, lack of motivation for on-the-farm betterment.

They're meeting these problems through the work of the broadly representative rural development committee and through other co-operative projects within the farm-business community. For example, the committee organized a trade day awards program, with a registered Jersey cow as first prize. Nineteen registered Jerseys have been placed with county farmers through this project. They are constantly adding communities to their vigorous "organized community program," which includes prizes of \$2,000. A labor survey has been completed to gain information for increased industry, and a small clothing factory, employing 250 people, has already located in the county. Money raised by local subscription financed a milk receiving plant, which will not only employ county workers but also provide a new market for dairy farmers.

The county rural development committee includes farm, business, civic, youth, and government representation. Three Extension Service employees are working part-time on the program, and one SCS specialist has also been added to the county staff.

**MICHIGAN APPOINTS PROGRAM  
LEADER FOR PENINSULA AREA**

Dr. Daniel W. Strut, an Extension economist with broad experience in the United States and abroad, has

been appointed to head Michigan's Resource Development Program covering the entire Upper Peninsula. The Continuing Education Service of Michigan State University has joined with its Extension Service to provide administrative leadership for a unified economic and social development program in this area, where there are many small, low-income farms. Using the resources of Michigan State University, leaders in the program are aiming at broad-scale development in the area, adapting adult education techniques to requirements of the program. Dr. Strut will have a staff of two people from the Extension Service. Five members of the Continuing Education Service will also be attached to his office.

**TENNESSEE ADDS TWO COUNTIES; TOTAL NOW FIVE**

Two additional  
pilot counties

in Tennessee -- Marion and Houston -- have joined the Rural Development Program, bringing the total to five for the State.

Marion, in the southeast part of the State, has some 900 farms, more than half of which are part-time and residential. The county's recently formed rural development committee is broadly representative, includes farmers, teachers, lawyers, businessmen, and employees of both agricultural and non-agricultural agencies.

Houston County, a small county in the northwest, had only 622 farms in 1954. A merchant, Carlisle Mitchum, heads the representative rural development committee and the county agent, J. D. Lewis, is secretary. To help people maintain adequate homesteads in the county, its leaders are seeking industry which will provide off-the-farm jobs. Members of the Tennessee Rural Development Committee assisted leaders in both counties to organize their programs.

**GREEN GOLD** is the title of a report on timber resources in the Cumberland Plateau region of eastern Kentucky which was issued through the cooperative efforts of the Kentucky Bankers' Association, the State Departments of Economic Development and Conservation, and the U. S. Forest Service. Attractively illustrated with photographs of the region's fine stands of timber and easy-to-read charts and maps, the report invites businessmen to look into wood industry prospects in east central Kentucky. Green Gold is similar to another cooperative forest resources report titled Micova, covering the middle Connecticut Valley region. A third report is in preparation describing forest resources in the area where Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky meet. Effective presentation of area resources is a big step toward area development. These cooperative U. S. Forest Service--development group reports are models of resource salesmanship. (For information contact regional foresters of the U. S. Forest Service.)

**PROGRAM AIDS AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT  
SAYS PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Calling attention to the tremendous productivity of the Nation, \$412 billion worth of goods and services in 1956 and urging alertness to possible inflation dangers, President Eisenhower sent his annual Economic Report to the Congress early in January. In a section, "Promoting Agricultural Adjustments," the report singles out the Rural Development Program for special mention. "Progress will come in part through better farming (in low-income areas)" says the report, "but education and vocational training, improvement of health and personal security, information on full-time job opportunities off the farm, and part-time farming supplemented by other employment, also have important roles to play."



IN BRIEF

With two formal meetings already held, Florida's planning committee is discussing a Rural Development Program for the State and naming a pilot county.

During 1956 farmers working part-time in trades and industry in the United States obtained 7,390 land bank loans totaling almost \$34 million through local national farm loan associations. The Farm Credit Act was amended in 1955 to enable lending to this group of farmers -- a major aid in achieving more rural development.

A current publication of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, Ten Steps to Industrial Survival candidly states the need for dispersion of industry as an essential national defense step. According to the CD booklet, dispersion "is a necessary means of industrial survival" although it creates many difficult problems, affecting the lives of workers, the community, and the economy of metropolitan areas.

The Agricultural Marketing Service has prepared a list of marketing and processing operations best suited to low-income rural areas. Many industries on the list would provide off-farm employment and also better farm marketing facilities in an area. (To get a copy, write Rural Development Program NEWS, Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.)

Hardin County, Illinois, in an almost completely rural Ohio River area, has published a pamphlet giving a thumb-nail sketch of the county's resources, which include fluorspar, timber, rock products, coal, Ohio river water. The pamphlet is a model of concise presentation.

An article in a recent issue of Fortune Magazine stressing the need for objective evaluation of areas being considered for plant location has high praise for rural areas. Entitled "Where to Put Your Plant", the article states: "The primary advantage of country labor is not so much lower hourly rates, but higher productivity . . . ." In rural areas, "a factory job offers relatively high and regular pay and shorter hours (in relation to other jobs in the area). Country factories, therefore, usually get the pick of the local labor market."

On many small farms the conservation reserve part of the Soil Bank Program offers an added source of regular income plus real long-term conservation benefits. A new USDA publication, The Soil Bank's Conservation Reserve, tells all about it. (To get a copy, write Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.)

NOTE: In some copies of the December NEWS, A. E. Triviz, Associate Director of the New Mexico Extension Service was referred to as the Dean of Agriculture. Dr. Robert A. Black is dean of Agriculture in New Mexico.